

they offered to doctors—to doctors—just a few hours ago.

As an official with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women put it: “Our Democratic colleagues should stop choosing a phantom problem . . .”—a phantom problem—“. . . over real victims.”

Because as the Los Angeles Times said:

The Hyde Amendment has been the law for many years. A fight over whether a fraction of the projected millions of dollars in aid to victims of trafficking and hunters of traffickers can be used on abortion services seems fruitless, and the bill should not be derailed by such a fight.

This has gone on long enough. It is time for Senators of conscience to stand up and end this filibuster now.

A BALANCED BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, before Easter, the Senate passed a balanced budget. The House of Representatives did as well. The next step in the process is for each Chamber to appoint Members to a conference committee that can work out any differences between those bills, and then send unified legislation back to Congress for a final vote. We are taking that next step today.

Some of our friends across the aisle seem eager to use this opportunity to rehash some of the same votes we took in passing the budget. The outcome of those votes won't be different, so I am not sure what the point would be, other than to slow down the process for its own sake. So I would urge them to reconsider and decide if that is really what they want to do.

But either way—either way—the new Congress is determined to keep working to finalize the budget. After years of a Senate that often refused to even consider a budget, this is a big change. And it is another example of the new Congress that is back to regular order and back to work.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION AND THE BUDGET

Mr. REID. The Republican leader talked about two issues: one, sexual trafficking, and, two, the budget. His statements regarding the two are illogical as anything can be. Illogical.

First of all, let's talk about sexual trafficking. Senators on this side of the aisle, with rare exception, are not wild about the Hyde amendment, but it has been the law of the land for some 30 years. And why is it the law of the land? Because it has been put in appropriations bills over these many years. But what my friend the Republican leader failed to mention is that if the Cornyn amendment or the Cornyn lan-

guage were adopted, it would change women's reproduction rights permanently. You see, the Hyde amendment has always applied to taxpayer-funded money. But what Senator CORNYN, the author of this bill and this amendment, wants to do is direct this to private money. They are two totally different things. Hyde has never, ever in the past applied to private money—nontaxpayer dollars. So that is why my friend's argument is totally illogical. Illogical. It has no basis in fact. We are not going to stand by to enlarge this so-called Hyde amendment to private money.

Now we have tried. We have tried. Ten different offers have been made to Senator CORNYN and Senator MCCONNELL to work our way through this. There are many ways we can handle this. But they feel—my friend the Republican leader and the assistant Republican leader feel this is their opportunity to broaden Hyde. We are not going to allow that to happen. It would be wrong. We have made 10 separate offers of ways to get to yes, but Republicans appear unwilling to compromise about the Hyde language, and that is unfortunate.

To carry on the illogic of the Republican leader, every organization has a mission statement, a summary of their goals and values. Congress is no different. There are mission statements that are done every year and they are called a budget. We have our mission statement; the Republicans have theirs. The budget sets forth our core values as a party, a statement of our values that tells the American people what we really care about and whose side we are on. We are committed to a budget that puts the middle class first, a budget that supports hard-working families, creates jobs, and invests in our future. The Republicans, by contrast, are hell-bent on passing a budget that creates a war on the middle class and serves the interests of special interests and the superwealthy.

Let's take a look at what the Senate Republican budget does. Remember, this is their statement of core values, and their war on the average American from Reno to Las Vegas to Chicago to Louisville—it doesn't matter where you go—is an attack on the middle class. Why do I say that? It deprives more than 16 million Americans of health coverage. That is the first thing their budget does. It devastates Medicare. It makes Medicare something we would not recognize, and they do it, of course, at the expense of America's seniors. It cuts Medicaid and hurts millions of families who are not able to pay for their care.

Everyone thinks Medicaid is just for poor people. Some people don't think they have much value in our society and Medicaid is something that shouldn't get much of our attention. But a significant amount of Medicaid money goes to people who are in rest homes and convalescent centers. So the money they are whacking from Medicaid hurts not only the young but the

old. It guts nutrition assistance. It guts food that can go to people who are hungry. It undermines job training and employment services for millions of American families. It cuts billions in financial aid for college students.

The Republicans not only want to cut aid to families as it relates to education, but then the debts they have accumulated, which are larger than credit card debt—they don't want to cut them any relief whatsoever. We have tried that lots of times. Our budget reflects that; theirs doesn't.

While the middle class is decimated by Senate Republicans—and who benefits? Special interests and the superrich. They are protected more than ever. The Republicans refuse to close a single loophole to reduce this deficit.

A single tax loophole they will not touch. They will not end tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas. They will not close loopholes for the wealthy, including hedge fund managers. They will not take away wasteful and unneeded tax breaks for the very powerful oil and gas industry. They are attacking the middle class while protecting the super wealthy. That is wrong.

Now, the Republican budget is also dishonest. I heard the Republican leader come here and boast. He boasted about the balanced budget they have. That is absolutely not true. Their budget does not balance the budget. It is simply dishonest to say so. The Republican budget claims to add more money for defense, but it does not.

It is no wonder that the New York Times called the Republican budget “a trillion dollar con job.” “A trillion dollar con job” is the Republican budget. I agree with the New York Times. In the coming days, as we move forward toward a conference—now remember moving forward toward conference has become kind of a joke around here because we do not have conferences like we used to. That is too bad.

There will be no meeting of the conferees. There will be no debate in open session as to how the budget should be changed. The Republicans will get to conference. There will be meetings held by the Republicans. Democrats will not be invited. If they are invited, it is pro forma: Here is what we have decided to do. The conferences, as we used to do them around here, do not exist. It is a rare occasion when they do.

We will not be looking into our efforts to try to improve the budget. We are not looking to obstruct the process to force another all-night vote-arama. We could. Under the rules we could offer endless, endless motions to instruct: 5, 6, 50, 100, 200. We could do that. We are not going to do that. But we will be offering a few motions to make clear where we stand on important issues.

For example, there will be an amendment that men and women who do the same work should be paid the same money. If my daughter works here and

a man works here and they do the same job, they should be paid the same amount of money. We have tried to do that. The Republicans have filibustered this five times over the last few years.

We are going to offer an amendment to provide sick leave to help families get through tough times. We are going to offer an amendment to ensure that same sex spouses have equal access to Social Security and veterans' benefits. We are going to offer an amendment to relieve the crushing burden of costly student loans. No one has worked harder on this issue than the assistant Democratic leader. I heard him yesterday talk about this at a meeting we had—the crushing, crushing costly student loans. We are going to offer an amendment to address the economic and national security threats posed by climate change.

In the West, we are in the midst of a 15-year drought. This is the 15th year. Lake Powell, the largest manmade lake in America, could go dry very quickly. Hundreds of thousands of acre feet of water will not go into that lake this year because of what is happening up in Colorado.

So when we are done offering what we feel should be ways to improve this dishonest budget that the Republicans put forward, the American people will have no doubt which party stands with the middle class and which stands with the special interests and billionaires. Yes, we have set forth what we believe are our core values, and we believe our core values are what the American people need.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided, and with the Democrats controlling the first half.

The assistant Democratic leader.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S DEATH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it was 150 years ago today—150 years ago today—when who is called the last casualty of the Civil War died. He was a man who was born in the Presiding Officer's home State of Kentucky. He grew up for a part of his life in Indiana but spent his formative years in my State of Illinois.

He was a country lawyer, an unlikely Congressman who, because of a political deal, was given a chance to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. He served only 2 years. He brought his family here to Washington for that experience.

They lived just across the street, in a boarding house where the Library of Congress now sits. His family did not like Washington in those days in the 1840s and returned back to his wife's home in Kentucky.

He stayed out here and served in Congress and liked it. He wanted to serve for a longer period of time but was reminded that this was not part of the agreement—only 2 years. So he left Washington, went back to Springfield, IL, practiced law, but continued to aspire to higher office.

In 1858, he ran for the Senate against a man named Steven Douglas. They had historic debates across the State of Illinois. When the votes were finally counted, Douglas was the victor, and this man returned to the practice of law. Just 2 years later, though, he was elected President of the United States.

He came to Washington at one of the most dangerous times in our history. The Civil War had started, and there was a question as to whether the Union could survive, whether the United States of America would survive. This simple country lawyer from what was considered the frontier of America in those days led our Nation during the most dangerous moments in our history.

He watched as more Americans died in that Civil War than in any war that we have ever witnessed. He saw a nation bitterly divided. The war raged on for years. There were moments—bleak and dark moments—when it looked as if the North would fail and the division of the country would begin.

But eventually the North prevailed in a victory that really the American people had given so much to achieve. In April of 1865, this was a tumultuous period. I commend to all of my colleagues a book written by Jay Winik, a Senate staffer entitled “April 1865,” if you want to get a feel for what it was like in America that month.

Many things occurred. The second inaugural address of this President is one of the most beautiful, touching, and moving speeches ever given by a President, where he turned toward the enemy who had fought the North for so many years and basically extended an olive branch when many others would have done just the opposite. “With malice toward none” and with “charity for all,” he gave that speech right outside here—right outside the Senate Chamber on the porch.

Then, in celebration of the victory of the Union, he and his wife attended a play not far from here, at Ford's Theatre. It was there that an assassin took his life. So 150 years ago today, Abraham Lincoln, the President of the United States, was assassinated. We have learned a lot from his life, from his leadership, and we enjoy the blessings of liberty and the Union today because that President and the men and women who stood by him saved the Union.

I reflect on this because I come from what is known as Mr. Lincoln's home-

town of Springfield, IL. I am not an expert on Lincoln. I am just a fan, as so many people are, not only across the United States but around the world. I hope we can remember him just for a moment today and reflect on the need for all of us to extend an olive branch to our personal enemies and to our political enemies and try to find how to eliminate an enemy by making a friend, as Lincoln said.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I cannot believe that Loretta Lynch still sits on this Executive Calendar of the Senate. It is put on our desk every day we are in session. She has been on that calendar for a longer period of time than any nominee for Attorney General in the last 30 years.

Senators can vote for or against Loretta Lynch to be Attorney General. That is their right. But an Attorney General nominee whose qualifications and character are unquestionable deserves better than the treatment she is receiving from this Senate. Ms. Lynch deserves a timely vote, just as other Attorney General nominees of other Presidents have received.

She was reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee on February 26 in a bipartisan vote. Nine Democrats and three Republicans voted for this Presidential nominee. She has now been pending on the Senate calendar right here for 48 days—48 days on this calendar. Not one word has been spoken on this floor in derogation of this fine woman, this fine nominee.

The last seven Attorney General nominees combined—all seven of them—had to wait on the Senate floor for a total of 24 days—seven nominees, 24 days. For Loretta Lynch it is 48 days.

The Senate has confirmed other nominees while the human trafficking bill has been pending on the floor. There is no procedural obstacle. While that bill has been pending, the Senate has voted on nominees for Assistant Secretary of Transportation, Assistant Secretary of Commerce, the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, and the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board. And on Monday we voted on a Federal judge. It is routine for the Senate to consider nominees on the Executive Calendar while still considering legislation.

It has been 158 days—more than 5 months—since Ms. Lynch's nomination to be Attorney General was announced. A vote still has not been scheduled. This is far longer than any recent Attorney General nominee has had to wait. Janet Reno waited 29 days. John Ashcroft, a Republican nominee, waited 42 days. Alberto Gonzales, 86 days. Michael Mukasey, 53 days. Eric Holder, 64 days. But when it comes to Loretta Lynch, it is 158 days.

The last Attorney General nominee whose nomination took this long to process was Edwin Meese in 1984, who